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class or single guest. He must know, first, the objects in the collections with an intimacy sufficient to perceive clearly their characteristic traits, practical and aesthetic; second, the history of their times, at least far enough to sympathize with the circumstances and problems of their creators; and third, the varied museum public, so that he can seize quickly on the appropriate object and facts to kindle the interest of each visitor or group. But equally clear is the difference in method and purpose with which the equipment is used. In the first case he is presenting a lesson, necessarily predetermined, to a class as a whole; he uses museum material, but could use it to better advantage in a place less distractingly novel to the students; he adapts to his audience, but to its average, not to individuals, nor (in any satisfactory degree) in response to self-revealing questions. In short, he does nothing which, *given equal equipment*, could not be done as well by the regular teacher in the regular class-room;<sup>1</sup> he is an instructor pure and simple.

In the second case, however, he drops the class-room manner, and becomes the host, alert to give his visitors pleasure by presenting to them his familiar friends among the collections. His task is a matter of self-effacing social tact, first in choosing congenial subjects for introduction, second in unobtrusively giving the guest such information as will place him *en rapport* with his new acquaintance, and lastly in so revealing the latter as to lay the foundations of a friendship that may be continued without further intervention from himself.

Both functions, then, belong legitimately to the museum instructor; but while in the one he is cheered by the consciousness that he is offering a serviceable and (under present conditions) otherwise unobtainable supplement to the curricula of the regular schools, into the other he throws himself with the enthusiastic conviction that he is helping fulfil the peculiar purpose of his chosen institution, the museum.

ELIZABETH M. WHITMORE.

<sup>1</sup> I am speaking only of the docent's specific instruction—not of its undoubted by-product, a quickened curiosity about, and perhaps love for, the museum itself.

## A HOLIDAY EXPERIMENT<sup>2</sup>

IT was felt that during the month of August, something might be done to brighten the holidays of the many school children who were unable this year to go into the country; in fact, an opportunity appeared to present itself to those who believe in the moral and mental value of art teaching to try the experiment of interesting children intelligently in some of the treasures of our museums.<sup>3</sup> The Victoria and Albert Museum, being larger than any other, and apparently depleted to a greater extent of its custodians, appeared the best field, and one particularly suitable for the Art Teachers' Guild. The objects in this museum do not appeal so obviously to the children as the animals and birds in the Natural History Museum, or the models of working machines in the Science Museum which, as one of the children called it, is "the place where you press a button and turn a handle, Miss," this last fulfilling the need of the child mind—wanting to do something, even if only pressing a button or turning a handle.

Sir Cecil Smith, the Director of the Museum, was accordingly approached, and the request proffered that members of the Art Teachers' Guild might take in hand those children who were found wandering aimlessly in the galleries. A personal interview was the immediate result, at which the Director explained that it had long been his desire to set on foot some such movement, whether on the lines of establishing a "Children's Room" containing exhibits of peculiar interest to children as in some of the American museums, or in some other manner. The necessary economies during the war time appeared to render the idea more difficult to attain, although the need was even greater. The Director eagerly accepted the proposal and at once made the necessary arrangements; a special room was

<sup>2</sup>Reprinted from The Art Teachers' Guild Record, London, September, 1915.

<sup>3</sup>An interesting letter from Miss Spiller chronicles the continuation and development of such holiday guidance during the summer of 1916, with the modest statement, "With added experience we feel that something of lasting good may have been commenced."

placed at the service of the Guild, provision being made for drawing by a plentiful supply of pencils and paper, the services of the official guide were also offered. At a second interview, Miss Churcher, the leading helper at Mrs. H. Ward's vacation school, was present, when it was recommended that no reward nor free meals of any kind should be given to the children; indeed, as after events proved, it was the guides who were the recipients of favors, and on Saturday afternoons screws of newspaper containing dubious looking sweets were produced by the children, and as a matter of course a share offered to the friendly guide.

Many members of the Guild were already helping in various forms of emergency work, but several expressed their willingness to try the experiment, and on August bank holiday a small number took possession of the room near the main entrance, which for the time being bore the sign "Art Teachers' Guild." With a few sheets of paper and pencils in hand, a trio of small boys were accosted. "Swords?" "Yes, Miss," was the ready answer, and in five minutes a party of about a dozen had collected round the Japanese armor and swords. "Would they like to try to draw them? There was paper with the King's initials which we might use if we were careful and pencils too, perhaps just the same as he might use if he came to the museum." And thus the work began; it was soon seen that the children were puzzled to determine their guide's relation toward them, they realized that they were not having lessons, but "teacher" came naturally as the fitting title, until one guide explained, "I am not your teacher," to be promptly asked, "What are you then?" "Well, I'm just your friend!" This was the key to the spirit in which the work was carried on, the children being quick to respond with their confidence, and many a little family story revealed much to help toward a good mutual understanding.

Not being prepared to meet with so many grimy children, the Director was again assailed, and arrangements made for the room to be washed out daily with disinfectant, and the working materials sterilized. Some boys "captured" were really

of the hooligan type, and on being invited to join a group, protested that they did not want to see anything, all they wanted was to make the policeman angry, "it was such fun." However, they consented to give the guide a chance, their attention was quickly riveted, and finally thanks were given and a request that they might come again. Others proved willing and regular visitors, and were absolutely transformed characters by the end of the holiday. The boys appeared to make the greater appeal to most of the guides, notwithstanding that they were more generally accustomed to girls; the London street boy is indeed an engaging creature, and it was good to come in contact with him in order to sharpen one's own wits. Two particularly fresh-looking little girls speaking English free from Cockney accent proved to be Belgians, and each carried a treasured doll; their delight was great when some Belgian visitors to the museum on speaking to them in Flemish and finding that they came from the same town promised to visit their mother. In sharp contrast was the solemn sad little lad with soaking wet boots on a wet afternoon who pathetically remarked, "Yes, Miss, they *are* very wet, and father said I had better stay at home and dry them, but mother said, 'Out you get,' and I hadn't time to get my ball, so I come in here again."

A sufficient amount of interest was exhibited to keep the groups well together, occasionally some daring spirits caused anxiety to their guide, as when they attempted to climb railings in perilous positions. The museum warders, probably themselves mindful of their own boyhood, entered into the holiday spirit and gave much help which is now gladly acknowledged.

Many children had strong preferences, weapons proved of great interest, and anything in connection with their knowledge of history was keenly appreciated; a set of pictures of historic battles was specially displayed in close proximity to the medals, which include the Victoria Cross together with French and Italian equivalents, as well as the Prussian Iron Cross.

A period spent among the Sedan chairs and sledges, with stories told concerning

them was much enjoyed. The two great halls of casts gave inspiration for drawing to sets of boys of about twelve years of age. They were shown the Roman soldiers as distinct from the Dacians on Trajan's column and at once made sketches of their armor; the neighboring set of little Cromwellian figures from the staircase in Cromwell House supplied several boys with interesting material, one of them drawing aloof from the others was attracted by the flowing lines of a low relief nymph from Versailles, while two others selected Italian relief portraits, and these were really well drawn. The Bayeux tapestry proved a perilous but captivating subject, its position high up around the balcony of one of the large halls made it physically exhausting to look at.

The historical costumes in the upper galleries were much admired, and interpreted in different ways, as for example the post boy's costume was translated by some of the children to mean a postman's uniform, and explanation by the friendly guide was sought. This collection would make a greater appeal, and certainly to older students and ordinary visitors also, if the costumes were displayed on well-modeled life-size figures as those in the Ethnographical Museum at Prague, where the characteristic type of each tribe is well marked. Two cases of beautifully modeled and dressed figures failed to attract because of their small size, which would not have been the case had they been arranged in their original setting as "Nativity" groups.

A visit to the Della Robbia examples was sympathetically enjoyed by the girls, in whom the baby ideal instinct was always present; they essayed to draw the cherubs, producing what would be unintelligible or even hideous to most folk, but with the right feeling behind, nevertheless. Two old doll's houses specially brought from Bethnal Green museum rejoiced the heart of every girl and some of the boys too. One of these is a perfect little house and furniture from Nuremberg, the other English and less complete. One small girl naively put it, "Of course I like the German doll's house best because it is the best, but I can't help wishing it were English." There were

other instances of spontaneous and unbiased opinion.

The reproductions of Roman silver from the Hildesheim, Bosco Reale, and other treasures roused the interest of both boys and girls, for their mothers had no silver saucepans, nor did they have such large saltcellars! The Mycenaean treasures led to stories of nations before the iron age, the bronze sword and daggers together with Danish weapons were favorite subjects for the pencil. Boys of Irish extraction were attracted by the case of reproductions from the beautiful Celtic brooches which have been worn by men. A morning in the Book Production Gallery led to great enjoyment, the big boys gravely pointed out letters for the little brothers to copy, while they selected quaint illuminated headings for their own study. A special collection in the Loan Court contained fine Japanese bronzes, little water wells for use in mixing Indian ink, these having the forms of animals, birds, fish, fruit, boats, and small houses, thus every child found something of particular interest, and several good drawings were produced.

It was a real "field day" when Mr. Watts, the keeper of the metal department, having returned from his holiday, devoted a whole afternoon to explain and demonstrate the workings of various locks. He produced a gilded lock which Henry VIII is credited to have had as part of his traveling luggage in order to make his own bedroom secure. There was first the puzzle to locate the keyhole, and then to see which little knob must be pushed and in what direction in order to disclose it. After this the large coffers (generally described by the children as "coffins") were looked at with added interest, the search for the keyhole being continued in a similar manner; one coffer was examined with special interest, since on account of its intricate fastenings it had not been opened since it had been in the museum. These mechanical mysteries fascinated children and guides alike, and here it may be well to say that wonder and admiration were continually expressed, but never in connection with the money value of the object, rather in a purpose fulfilled, and real worth.

A description of the process of manufacture always riveted the attention, and many pertinent questions were asked in connection with damascening, engraving, inlay, stained glass, pottery, weaving and embroidery which were among the crafts under notice. A little girl hazarded the opinion that the sixth-century Coptic embroideries must have been very well made because "they had worn so well." The exhibition of Mestrovic's powerful sculpture aroused curiosity, and after a short chat several young students made their way alone to them, one small boy of eight drew afterwards from memory what might have been taken to be a party of faithful followers bearing the coffin of their martyred hero to a fitting place of entombment, but in response to questioning gave the explanation, "Them's the ladies outside, Miss"—the solemn row of stern Serbian caryatides.

The children were critical of each other's work, and generous in their praise. One set of boys organized a competition in their street for the best drawing of a soldier or sailor, which drawing, clearly and deftly executed, was presented to their guide. When the last day of the holidays came there were many requests, "You'll come and show us more things at Christmas, won't you?" The request has also been made by the Director, who looks forward to being able to provide more special exhibits of particular attraction. The number of the little flock rose to about 100 daily, many of them being regular visitors, eagerly joining their guide the moment lunch was finished to claim a second turn. The services of some boy scouts had been requisitioned, and they were put in charge occasionally, proving useful in keeping the boys together. The official guide gave much help, often suggesting the means of obtaining information if he could not himself give it. The experiment was greatly enjoyed, and has been sufficiently successful to encourage the hope that the Art Teachers' Guild may be able to show how much can be done by enthusiastic teachers, who being well qualified, are ready to cooperate with the keepers of our national treasures, and make them of living interest to the coming generation.

ETHEL M. SPILLER.

## THE USE OF MOTION PHOTOGRAPHY IN MUSEUMS

THE educator has been tardy in his recognition of the value of motion photography, notwithstanding its almost miraculous performances and unlimited possibilities. It was, perhaps, quite natural that its least important appeal, that of providing amusement, should have been recognized first by both producer and public. Notwithstanding the vast proportions of the industry which is supplying amusement films, it will, before long, be far outrivaled by the activities which will produce purely educational subjects. The amusement films are of necessity ephemeral. Like current plays they run for a short season and go to the discard, never to be resurrected. On the other hand, the negatives depicting the making of a rug, the life of the bee, or the wonders of a drop of water, when once recorded, are good for all time, a permanent investment affording constantly increasing returns. Even now thousands of educational films in the field of art, archaeology, science, industry, and travel are available at a low cost, although only a small number of educational institutions are at present using motion pictures. It will take no great imagination to forecast the growth of the educational film as soon as the vast number of schools and colleges—public, private, parochial, and technical—museums, libraries, and the myriads of educational clubs and lyceum circuits are equipped to utilize them. Even now, with the comparatively small demand, the remote corners of the earth are being searched for material. With the rapidly increasing market for educational films they will be supplied in correspondingly increasing numbers and museums of art will be able to secure splendid material covering every department of museum work. The use that may be made of moving pictures in a small museum is well illustrated by the experience of the Toledo Museum of Art during the past twelve months.

For a period of several weeks daily talks were given at the museum on ceramics to some three thousand fifth grade pupils of the public schools. These talks were fol-